

22nd December, 1959.

Professor J. Lederberg,
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STANFORD. CALIFORNIA. U.S.A.

Dear Josh,

With Courtice in Experimental Pathology and Ogston coming to take charge of a Department of Physical Biochemistry the available space in the John Curtin School of Medical Research is now almost occupied; and we are concerned with the best usage of the 1-1 $\frac{1}{2}$ floors still available. There is general agreement that these should be occupied by men who are primarily biologists rather than chemists, and the fields which are under serious consideration are pharmacology and genetics. Some of those able to judge the field believe that it will be impossible to get a good pharmacologist; and there is increasing support for the idea that the new department should be genetics. A new slant has been given to this by a suggestion from Frankel (who is now on the University Council) that a department of Human Genetics be established. What he has in mind especially is the fact that in the New Guinea highlands there is unique human material; and the results with Kuru and recent bloodgroup studies certainly support this view. Also, of course, it looks as though human cell genetics will come good soon. There is in Australia one man who would be most competent and efficient on the bloodgroup genetical work and on general medical genetics - R.J. Walsh of the Red Cross Blood Transfusion Unit in Sydney - but he is not trained as a geneticist and is probably not widely known abroad.

I was asked by the School Committee to seek your views on this subject - both the general one of Genetics or Human Genetics, and the specific one of the man. There will be, within two or three years, a Readership in Viral Genetics in my own Department so I think that the emphasis should probably not be on microbial genetics - unless you'd like to come to the peace and quiet of Canberra! - or perhaps Pontecorvo.

I'd welcome your advice.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,



Frank Ferner.